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Response/Reflection to Learning Styles and CAST

After taking the learning style survey it confirmed what I had already known about my learning style. I learn best when I see and hear the information being given in the classroom. I benefit greatly when instructors highlight the most essential information from the lecture on the board or in a power point presentation. I also remember information much better if I have to write it down as opposed to just reading off of a handout. I do not benefit from group studying and often get more confused if students are all discussing different aspects of the curriculum at the same time. The survey did however give some insight on what types of note taking I would benefit most from, for example using flash cards because of my ability at visual recall and recognition. It also suggested I use color coding when taking notes to help associate different content with each color. The most interesting suggestion was that I take notes and place them on audiotape and then listen to them, it suggests this will help with association and recall on tests.

My overall impression of the CAST website was that it was rather extensive and informative. I really liked how it divided up chapters so that you can skim, making it easier to look for information in the text. I also really enjoyed the classic texts; build your own book, and model lessons section. In the classic text section you could read Shakespeare’s Sonnet XVIII and it highlighted notes and valuable information. This tool could be essential for a struggling student to be able to make connections between the readings and their assignments. I myself struggled with poetry, but once someone explained it to me I was able to better complete assignments. I wish this tool was available for me. I liked the build your own book section this would be a great opportunity to split up concepts and have students work together to create books for the class to use. The teacher model lesson section was excellent, especially because it showed the UDL connections that are made throughout the lesson. Even if you were not using a specific lesson their might be ideas here for help in future activities.

In the online text section I found the information on affective networks to be extremely valuable. It is often overlooked, especially in a classroom of 30 students, but one must always be vigilant to look for students who might be struggling or acting out due to emotional issues, either in the classroom or at home. The text suggested that while all three networks work together the affective one is often the least focused upon. Students go through a tremendous amount of emotion while they are in school and this can often have an effect on their work and override the suggestions of the other two networks. It is important that we as teachers recognize these situations and make sure we utilize what we have been taught; to create a UDL (differentiated instruction/accommodations) for these students. We need to refocus them on their studies and to do so must connect something they enjoy with our curriculum hoping to re-motivate and engage them in the content.

I did not really enjoy the first activity where I went over the strengths and weaknesses of creating a garden or the second looking at the picture. I think this was because my computer was running too slow and I could not focus on the lesson. I do however, understand the information that the activities were trying to impart, which is the importance of all of our networks working together. I really understand the importance of UDL and differentiated instruction. I feel the most important part of being a teacher is to make sure the students are motivated in their education. If a student is not able to understand some of the content, we as the instructors must find a way to make the information make sense to them; whether this is accomplished through leveled and differentiated instruction, or in varying our methods of instruction to include for more varied learning abilities. I would like to explore more about the lesson and instruction aspects of the cast learning site. I also wish there was more to look at in the internet inquiry section for science. It would be great if they had a lesson to look at that included more grade levels. I feel I will definitely use the CAST website in the future.